Once, ill-advisedly, the trusty Marina Stokes—who has been with the maestro as an assistant and friend for over 15 years—tried to teach Temirkanov to drive.

''It was a disaster,'' she says with thinly concealed mirth. ''He drove over a flower bed.''

''You see!'' laughs Temirkanov. ''Even my left foot is romantic! I don't drive into cars. I drive into flower beds.''

[From The Washington Post, Jan. 21, 2000]

BALTIMORE SYMPHONY'S MAN OF SUBSTANCE

(By Philip Kennicott)

The solid and sensible Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, which puts its decidedly working-man's city on the cultural map, has an aristocrat at its head. Yuri Temirkanov, the eminent and respected Russian conductor, gave his inaugural concert as the BSO's music director last night. If his tenure builds on the strengths of this performance, the Temirkanov years could be legendary.

Baltimore is a lucky city. Fifteen years ago, when the Cold War was still in progress, the idea that one of the Soviet Union's foremost and distinguished artists would take the head artistic job at the BSO was inconceivable. Temirkanov was the chief of Leningrad's Kirov Opera, and within a few years, would take the helm of the country's most respected orchestra, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic. He was a blue-blood musician, if not in the traditional sense, in the artistic sense, a man of wide culture, immense influence and a reputation for artistic and personal integrity. He could afford to take risks that would have sunk a lesser figure.

Then the Cold War ended, and with it the subsidies that made the Soviet musical scene flourish. The St. Petersburg Philharmonic, which he still leads, maintains its quality but is threatened by dwindling audiences and dwindling resources. To keep it afloat, Temirkanov must tour the orchestra, and when he does, foreign audiences want him to bring Russian repertoire—Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich, Prokofiev.

But Temirkanov doesn't want to be pigeonholed. One might have expected that the world's very best orchestras would offer one of the finest living conductors the chance to conduct Elgar and Mahler; yet Baltimore secured him, and now a very good orchestra has a very great conductor. Early signs suggest that both will flourish.

Temirkanov chose Mahler's Symphony No. 2 for his first official concert as music director. Like Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, which also does service for large, ceremonial occasions, Mahler's Second is best heard infrequently; even for listeners who love it beyond reason, it takes discipline to keep its brutality raw and its sentimentality delicate and unself-conscious. Although it lasts at least an hour and a half, it is perhaps Mahler's most succinct statement: Everything that he does before and after this symphony is here in germ, the funeral marches, the bucolic alpine sounds, the despair of death and the frisson of hope that perhaps this world is not wrought from cold, insensible iron.

The new music director conducts Mahler with little wasted motion. In this often violent and saturnine work, Temirkanov called for only those cataclysms necessary to make the composer's point. He is a purist on the podium, attending diligently if not slavishly to the score, taking the spare theatrical liberty that proves he is confident of the audience's attention. He will extend a pause to the breaking point or allow the sound of offstage horns to die into protracted silences, but these exceptional moments only underscore his judicious, masonry approach.

The excitement of the performance was the excitement of comprehension. One heard Mahler's effort to build a new psychology for the orchestra while remaining somewhat distant from the music's bellicose and sloppy extremes. It made Mahler unfold the way Beethoven unfolds, though at a much more geological pace.

This runs counter to misguided expectations about how Russian-trained conductors conduct, and how Mahler is supposed to be played. Temirkanov's interpretation was not a cinematically sweeping approach, nor an overly personal one. But it invited serious listening, appreciation of the orchestra's manifold strengths and respect for the conductor's attention to balance.

Temirkanov was rewarded by his new orchestra with ferocious attention. String sounds were clear and incisive, woodwind playing precise and balanced, horns and trumpets warm and blended. Chaos was always intentional, never an unfortunate accident. Soprano Janice Chandler and mezzo-soprano Nancy Maultsby were well chosen, and used as elements within the musical construct rather than soloists dominating it. The BSO chorus sang its opening whisper of resurrection—''Auferstehen''—with a sound familiar from Robert Shaw, a fully fleshed whisper, at the limit of a large chorus's ability to sing a shade above silence.

Baltimore and the orchestra made the evening an event. Outside the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall, a searchlight cut laserlike swaths through the cold night sky. Mayor Martin O'Malley gave the new conductor honorary Baltimore citizenship. But musical protocol and political protocol don't mix well; Mahler's monumental symphony was the point of the evening, and Temirkanov seemed uncomfortable receiving his first huge ovation before having conducted a note. But that discomfort represents the strengths this cultured, dignified and exceptional conductor will bring to the orchestra: a style long on substance and refreshingly free of empty gestures and self-aggrandizement.●

MEMORIAL OF MRS. JEAN MACARTHUR

● Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the passing of a wonderful woman and a great American. On the 21st of January, at the age of 101, Mrs. Jean MacArthur passed away at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York.

In 1988, President Reagan recognized her contribution to America by presenting her the Presidential Medal of Freedom. As you know, the Medal of Freedom is the highest award our country can give to a civilian. The citation for the award recognized that ''Jean MacArthur has witnessed the great cataclysms of our time, survived war and peace, conquered tragedy and known triumph.'' President Reagan also referred to her as ''a shining example, a woman of substance and character, a loyal wife and mother, and like her General, a patriot.''

The General and Mrs. MacArthur were married in 1937. Mrs. MacArthur remained devoted to her husband until his death in 1964. Her devotion to him was not only emotional, but involved a great deal of physical sacrifice. You see, Mr. President, Mrs. MacArthur lived with the General in Manila until they were forced to retreat to Corregidor by the Japanese. While on Corregidor, she endured daily air attacks while raising their 4 year old son, Arthur. Furthermore, when it was obvious the Japanese would take the Philippines, the president of the Philippines offered passage for her and her son to Australia. She replied: ''We have drunk from the same cup; we three shall stay together.'' She then continued to stay with her husband in the field until General MacArthur finally accepted the surrender of the Japanese in Japan.

After the death of General MacArthur, Mrs. MacArthur lived out her life in New York where she remained active in philanthropic activities. She even served as the honorary chairman of the MacArthur Foundation, which was created in honor of her husband.

The spouses of our Americans in uniform seldom receive the recognition they deserve for their contribution to the valor, patriotism, and loyalty of our fighting forces. Her contribution to America cannot be quantified, but it must not be forgotten. It's no wonder that General MacArthur often introduced her as ''my finest soldier.''

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me today in paying tribute to this outstanding woman and her sterling contribution to America.●

TRIBUTE TO THOMASINA ''TOMMY'' ROGERS

● Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate the Administration on the selection of Thomasina ''Tommy'' Rogers, a constituent and friend, to serve as the Chairman of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission. Ms. Rogers was confirmed by the U.S. Senate and has served on the Commission since November 1998. On June 4, President Clinton designated her Chairman.

Ms. Rogers, a resident of Upper Marlboro, MD, has held a number of high ranking positions in the federal government, both as a career civil servant and as a political appointee. She entered the Senior Executive Service in 1987. At the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, she served as Legal Counsel where she received numerous awards for exemplary performance. She was later nominated and confirmed to chair the Administrative Conference where she served until 1995.

Ms. Rogers received a law degree from Columbia University and an undergraduate degree in journalism from Northwestern University. She has served on the Boards of Directors of Children's National Medical Center in Washington D.C. and the American Arbitration Association since 1995.